



AHA 3—A SUDDEN AWAKENING

Luke 15:17-19
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Introduction: Aha happens most often when our life collides with God's grace and there is an undeniable change. As we saw in our previous lessons, it occurs when there is a sudden **A**wakening, brutal **H**onesty, and immediate **A**ction.

- A. **The word Awakening (or awaken) is a very interesting word.** It means, "to stir up; rouse to activity." It's coming into awareness of something, often suddenly. It can be a rude awakening; sometimes it's shocking or disagreeable. It's a perfect word for those who have wandered away to the distant country—15:17-19. It's needed!
- B. **The word Awakening implies that someone is sleeping.** The way we sleep will make a difference as to what it will take to wake us up. Examples: **Long sleepers or sound sleepers**—if we wake them, they will be startled; **light sleepers, no sleepers**—maybe insomnia. (Some "*no sleepers*" are so active they deprive themselves of sleep due to busy lives; for some it's from partying, drugs, wild living—Prov. 4:16.)
 1. **When it comes to the need for spiritual awakenings, our natural sleep patterns illustrate what is needed.** The longer or more profound our spiritual sleep is, the more intense/even shocking the method to awaken us might be—Ephesians 5:14.
 2. **A wonderful example:** Evan Roberts and the Welch revival (100,000 people became Christ followers). "I have a message to you from the Lord:
 - a. **First**, you must confess any known sin or any wrong done to another.
 - b. **Second**, you must put away any doubtful habits (remove anything in your life that you are in doubt about or feel unsure about).
 - c. **Third**, you must obey the Spirit promptly/instantly.
 - d. **Fourth**, you must confess Christ publicly." **Summary:** It was shockingly effective for the spiritual (sleeping) state the country of Wales was in.

With that in mind, let's focus on how God awakened the prodigal son in Luke 15.

- I. **Awakening in the Distant Country.** "*...the younger son...set off for a distant country...*"
 - A. **The Premise of this lesson is not a rule, but it's often true:** The longer we've been asleep, the more difficult waking up is, e.g., a long, sound sleeper, or sleep-deprived.
 1. **It's also true of Aha:** If we've spent any time in the distant country, we know that it's hard to wake up there. (Maybe we've been asleep so long we can't even hear the alarm, or another voice; or we've been so sleep-deprived, so "drugged" by our activities, it will take some painful experience to wake us up—Prov. 6:9-11.)
 2. **It's important to remember:** Whatever state we might be in (in the distant country), God always has a potential AHA planned! God's at work in the parable and always in us.
 - B. **The Prodigal son is about to wake up.** Let's watch and see how God does it.
 1. **Let's review his state.** Luke 15:14-16 tells us he even wanted to eat the pig slop.
 2. **But then there is an AWAKENING** - an AHA moment—Luke 15:17-19.

- a. What changed? The key phrase is: *“When he came to his senses...”*
- b. What does that look like? (We realize we haven’t been thinking sensibly.)

C. **The Pattern of all Aha stories begins about the same way** - leaving the Father’s house. They all progress about the same way - ending up in the distant country. Here’s what we should know about sudden awakenings when they happen:

1. **The first element** is to realize **WHERE WE ARE**. It’s simple, but so important. In Luke 15:17 he *“comes to his senses”* and says, *“...Here I am starving to death.”*
 - a. One of the chief tools Satan uses (to try to keep us asleep rather than waking up to God’s will) is to lie and say that *“things really aren’t that bad.”* But in order to truly have a sudden awakening, we need to be **brutally honest with ourselves and be truthful about WHERE WE ARE**. We’re in a distant pigpen.
 - b. Evan Roberts said: “1) We must confess any known sin or any wrong done to another; 2) We must put away any doubtful habit (remove anything in our life that we are in doubt about or feel unsure about)”—vv. 18-19. Where are we?
2. **The second element of a sudden awakening is we realize WHERE WE WERE.** v. 17—*“When he came to his SENSES, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!’”*
 - a. The son in Luke 15:17 **“comes to his senses”** and he honestly remembers **where he was**. (Again, this is the brutal honesty of the **AHA** that we need.)
 - b. **Satan will try to keep us from waking up** in the distant country by telling us that the Father’s house is NO better. **CAN YOU HEAR HIM?** But if we realize **WHERE we really WERE, we’ll accurately remember the Father**.
 - **Other examples:** In Exodus 16:3, the Israelites are pining for food in Egypt. (Satan will lie and tell us Egypt was great and the Father’s house was bad.)
 - **A Ministry Application** for those rescuing pigpen dwellers—2 Tim. 2:25-26.
3. **The third element of AHA is we realize WHERE WE COULD BE and we take immediate action to leave for home.**
SUMMARY: When the son wakes up he realizes, even at the worst of times, the Father’s house is far better than anything in the distant country. In fact, even servanthood in the Father’s house is better—vv. 17-19; Ps. 84:10. **Go home now!**
Promise: It will be better than we remember. (Yes, there’ll be consequences, but the privileges gained and welcome received will be fantastic—Luke 15:22-24.)

II. **The Story’s Application.** Let’s all ask ourselves, “Where are **WE** in the story”?

- A. **Maybe we’re in the safety and protection of a Christian community**, but we’re getting lethargic, uninvolved in our caring, sharing, or serving. Maybe we’re in a stupor of boredom. Let’s **WAKE UP** before we drift off or get tempted away!
- B. **Maybe we’re at rock bottom, or in a pigpen-like experience.** God wants to wake us up and remind us of what life was like in His house. **He wants to** lead us home.
- C. **Maybe we HAVEN’T hit rock bottom YET**, but WE know we’re headed for the distant country. Let’s be smart and avoid rock bottom. Let’s wise up!

Conclusion: “I have a message to you from the Lord. First, we must confess any known sin. Second, we must put away any doubtful habit. Third, we must obey the Spirit promptly/instantly. Fourth, we must confess our faith publicly. Let’s go or stay home!”